



[Amilcar Cabral, 1924 - 1973](#)

## Amilcar Cabral

The second text for this week (**attached**) is Amilcar Cabral's speech on [National Liberation and Culture](#). This speech was originally delivered on February 20, 1970, as part of the Eduardo Mondlane Memorial Lecture Series at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York. That is more than forty years ago, yet the speech is as fresh and as relevant as if it had been written yesterday, and based on appraisal of our present circumstances.

Foreign domination

*"can be maintained only by the permanent, organized repression of the cultural life of the people concerned," wrote Cabral. Attempted assimilation is "a more or less violent attempt to deny the culture of the people in question."* It does

not work. In fact there are no ways in which the coloniser can succeed.

*“...it is generally within the culture that we find the seed of opposition, which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement,”* says Cabral.

*“...national liberation takes place when, and only when, national productive forces are completely free of all kinds of foreign domination. The liberation of productive forces and consequently the ability to determine the mode of production most appropriate to the evolution of the liberated people necessarily opens up new prospects for the cultural development of the society in question, by returning to that society all its capacity to create progress,”* says Cabral.

Cabral develops the idea that *“...we must take into account the fact that, faced with the prospect of political independence, the ambition and opportunism from which the liberation movement generally suffers may bring into the struggle unconverted individuals. The latter, on the basis of their level of schooling, their scientific or technical knowledge, but without losing any of their social class biases, may attain the highest positions in the liberation movement,”* he warns.

Cabral concludes

*“...the liberation struggle is, above all, a struggle both for the preservation and survival of the cultural values of the people and for the harmonization and development of these values within a national framework.”*

In Portuguese: *A luta continua!*

Cabral's "[The Weapon of Theory](#)" was used in the introductory part of this course.

The importance that this outstanding revolutionary Amílcar Cabral placed on cultural and intellectual output is plain to see. The Mozambican scholar **Aquino de Bragança** (like Cabral, a martyr), colleague of another intellectual and martyr, Ruth First, called intellectual work "an instrument of the revolution". It is the ground upon which the revolution stands.

Aquino de Bragança was killed in the 19 October 1986 air crash in which President Samora Machel also died, thirteen years after the murder of Amílcar Cabral.

We are not yet safe enough to think that the killing of political intellectuals and political cadres is a thing of the past, or that attempts at "*organized repression of the cultural life of the people*" have ceased.

At least 13 of the revolutionary writers in this series were violently killed. One of them was killed since the course was first given, and now. The revolution must strive to make the murdered heroes live again through their writings.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Amílcar Cabral, National Liberation and Culture, 1970](#).
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